

## Quetta Compendium

*Balochistan Province, Pakistan*

*by Joe Lapp*

### Balochi

The Baloch in the beaded cap  
is a modern man, wears his beard  
on his sleeve, not his face. He'll even let  
his wife work after babies, if  
he's lenient. Sure, he'll lob a hand grenade  
over a wall now and again, but what's  
some shrapnel between long-lost enemies?

### Pashtun

The Pashtun, now, he's all tradition,  
gives you hell for glancing at  
his women, talks a language  
sounds like rocks between the teeth,  
wears those hats and turbans like  
the Taliban. He'll serve tea, however,  
to the dirtiest of strangers, and die  
for you if you're his friend.

### Everyone Else

The rest, they're all damned settlers, even if  
they've been here sixty years.  
The Sindhi with his hand-dyed cloth,  
the Afghan with his donkey cart, they'd  
better watch their backs, be thankful  
for a house at all, not just a tent  
like all those gypsy folk.

### (Women

There's a bit of burqa blue in Quetta,  
but mostly shawls, big as sheets, making women  
look like walking bolts of cloth. Cloth, in fact,  
is all that gets them out the house – the men can run  
the other errands, but won't go near  
the fabric shops. If you see a lady  
on the street, respectfully look away.)